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Congo News Letter

Vol. XL JANUARY 1949 No. 1

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

RUTH ENGWALL

"BABWA" is a new word I learned on this summer's itinerary. In the village of Tanunu, we talked about the problems of the Christian family and the pastor kept saying over and over again "Our women are babwa-ed". I asked for a definition of this word and I got several explanations. A woman who goes to sell her produce and receives only part of the value, is babwa-ed. If a husband goes to sell produce from his wife's garden and he returns with the money but he holds back some of it while telling her that that was all he received, the wife is babwa-ed. Some husbands, when they commit misdemeanors, won't humble themselves by asking for forgiveness, but their wives must go and beg for pardon. The wives who agree to be babwa-ed in this way take upon themselves their husbands' guilt and become the sinners. When they ask for forgiveness they must ask as though they were the wrongdoers.

Tata Nduengisa explained that their women have each three gardens, one belongs to the husband because he paid for her hoe; one they have together and the third belongs to the wife. In all three gardens the wife does most of the work. The family eats from the garden they have together, but everything sold from this garden belongs to the husband as well as all the profits from the garden called his garden. That leaves one garden for the wife, but here all profits go to the clan uncle. Financially the wife is babwa-ed, she cannot spend the money she herself earns. The three-garden method for the wife is a hang-over from the days when the wife did all the garden work. Today the government requires all men to plant and care for large gardens.

At the Mukimbungu matondo (association) we had an evening session devoted to the Christian Family. Tata Paul explained very well Matt. 19:4-6 "the two shall become one flesh" by saying that the husband and wife are like the trunk of an nsafu tree. When he asked, "Who owns the nsafu fruit?", the audience all

answered, "The tree". Tata Paul tried to show that the father and mother have a closer relationship to the children than the clan uncle and that the children really belong to the father, as well as the mother.

During the discussions one father said, "I work hard to take care of my children and to send them to school, but my wife is very listless and uninterested, although she is well and strong. What shall I do with her?" I said, "Women lose interest because they lack the incentive to work. Since they are always under either husband or uncle they are never free beings. They have no independent status. Your women are hungry for love and respect and praise like all human beings. To build right relationships in the home is a life-time job. In a Christian family, you cannot order your wife to work, you must work together with her, think with her and pray with her".

Once during the evening's discussion the men said, "Ask the women". When I turned to the women, the crowd bent down, each woman trying to hide behind another woman. I turned to the men and said, "This is good example of how cowed your women are".

Here is another problem. One of our Christian leaders passed away lately. In settling up the estate we were surprised to learn that the wife had so very little. Although he had a fairly good salary he had never bought his wife a plate or a spoon. All her thirteen years of married life she had eaten out of the kettle using a green leaf for a spoon. He had spoons and dishes for himself but he would not let this wife touch them.

Last night Meli the wife of our former overseer came to tell us that when her husband died his brothers had taken everything, even her things. Now his brothers have written to her demanding the peanuts which she raised while her husband was living. Those peanuts are stored upstairs in our attic. We won't let his brothers get them because Meli has five children to feed.

These are only a very few of the problems the Congo people face. We must do what we can to build Christian family relationships of mutual helpfulness and of mutual love and respect between the two main characters--the husband and the wife.

MARRIAGE IN THE CONGO

LEONARD GITTINGS

IT takes a long time to get married in the Congo, and the preliminaries often become very tedious. If you are an African father with a son, you start the ball rolling when the child is very young. You approach the father of a little girl, who may even be a baby in arms, and you make a rather loose contract involving a tentative bridal payment. Everything is just verbal, and the bride's father is given some latitude in interpreting the price and conditions under which his daughter will ultimately be given in marriage to the youth.

If a man has several girls, he usually divides the responsibility of marrying them off with some of his men relatives. In some tribes this is the prerogative of the maternal uncles. Each relative gets the best price possible, and as payment is made he gets his share by way of a little commission. Other relatives may also crash in on the matter, demanding a little portion of the dowry.

The boy's father starts and continues the payments in a kind of leisurely manner until the son becomes old enough to take over himself. Then it becomes the aim of the girl's guardian or parent to get all he possibly can from the prospective son-in-law. The installments are paid as they can be gathered together, and include a rather interesting variety of things. At one time the prospective groom will appear before his prospective "in-laws" dragging a goat; at another time he may carry in large packages of native food or a calabash of palm oil or palm-wine, while on still another occasion he presents himself bearing a couple of hundred francs (about five dollars), which he has saved over a long period of time.

Among some tribes, such as the Baluba of the Central Congo region certain kinds of beads are absolutely required, while muzzle-loading guns are much in demand in other areas. Along the rivers a youth may be asked to furnish baskets of smoked fish, and in sections where there is plenty of game, he is asked to bring a few legs of meat from an antelope, wild pig, or buffalo.

In or near the white centers, the price may be fixed in terms of money only, and the price range all the way from 500 francs (a little more than 12 dollars) to four or five times that amount. The prestige of the father, the quality of the girl, and the ability of the youth to pay, influence the amount demanded and there is no fixed amount or even a good average in many districts. For most natives it is the work of years to obtain these sums, for even some of those who work for white men may receive only two or three dollars per month.

Technically a girl, when she grows old enough, may refuse the groom chosen for her, but it is not often that she turns down the choice of her parent. Should the girl's father die before the marriage is consummated, she is held to be irrevocably bound to the choice made by her father before his death. A girl would never break such a marriage contract.

Well, the day of final payment arrives, either because the father is fully satisfied with what he has received, or because the youth has threatened to call it off and demand the return of all he has paid down. Arrangements are now made for the marriage in the girl's village and in some parts of the Lower Congo the relatives plan a final raid on the resources of the groom and his dad. They stretch a few lines of native string, sometimes even make an arch of branches, across the path, and each time the father and son pass one of these the father makes a "gift" to the bride's relatives. One day as I came along a rather primitive motor road in our mission truck I found my way barred by several of these arches outside a village where a marriage was taking place. They were even decorated with wild flowers.

The marriage ceremony is simple and takes place before the two sets of relatives in the open village, neighbors and friends being allowed also to witness the proceedings. One of the parents or other relatives of the girl lectures her publicly on the virtues and duties of a good wife. This is followed by a lecture to the groom by a parent or other member of the family, and he is told what is expected of him. This concludes the ceremony, and everyone prepares for the feast that follows. In some tribes the wedded couple eat together in privacy, the only time they do so.

When the feast is over, the village maidens pick up the bride's household utensils (she furnishes these), and to the accompaniment of singing, the couple are escorted to the groom's village. There is no written or other form of contract, and the permanence of the union depends upon the success they can make of living together. The marriage can be terminated at any time by one party walking out on the other.

The Christians, however, are making many changes in the marriage system. Not only are they modifying the dowry arrangement and giving the girl freedom of choice, but they have also made the relationship of husband and wife more permanent and inviolable. One of the brightest spots in Congo mission work is the Christian family and home with its freedom from the evils of polygamy and from cheap and promiscuous marital relationships.

A LESSON IN AGRICULTURE AT KIKONGO

CHARLES E. SMITH

THE class may open with the teacher asking this question: "How many of you have seen an 'mbwaki' child in your village?" All hands are raised because all are familiar with the sight of a little child with distended abdomen and swollen face and feet, who has pipestem arms and legs and whose ribs can easily be counted thru the skin that is tightly stretched over them. Instead of shining eyes, pretty curly hair, and dark brown velvet skin, the "mbwaki" child has matted yellow hair from which the kinky curls have disappeared, dry yellow skin and listless dull eyes.

The teacher's next question: is "Well, what do you suppose is the matter with these children we call "mbwaki?' And varied answers are given. Some will say: "He has no strength" and will explain that lack of strength by saying that the child has hook worm, or that he does not eat. Others will not dare say it, but they will believe that the child has been bewitched. In all probability the child will have hook-worm, because almost everyone out here does have it. And it will have advanced secondary anemia. But recent scientific research brings forth the theory that this "mbwaki" is a disease of malnutrition.

In any case, the inspiring thing about this is that all members of the class want to know how to prevent this disease; they want to know how to have strong bodies—and consequently happy hearts and smiling faces. When it is pointed out that the lack of proteins (food belonging to the "tribe of meats") is a factor in malnutrition, there is a hearty chorus of, "Oh yes, if only we could have all the meat that we want !"

I well remember the times on the trail when we were able to procure a piece of meat for our carriers. It was pitiful to watch them stand around the one who was cutting the meat into pieces to be distributed to them. They watched every move of the hunting knife with eager, yearning eyes . . . . there is an unwritten law that the one carving the meat must take the last piece in the line

ofdistribution. It is therefore to his interest to see that there is no piece that is smaller than the others. But let us suppose that there is one piece that is more desirable than an other and some body tries to grab it before his turn. There is sure to be trouble and if some one does not step in quickly to arbitrate, knives may flash or clubs fan the air, because the people are "meat hungry".

Now let us get back to our class. Everyone is awake now that the subject of "meat" has been brought up. They are quite surprised to learn that there are other foods that belong to the "tribe of meats", foods such as beans, peanuts, eggs, milk, etc. But what little girl would dare to eat eggs . . . it would mean that she would never have any children. And what foolish mother would give goat milk to her child . . . . she would not dare risk having it become foolish like a goat!

The diet of the average Congolese is largely made up of starches, so they must be taught about the importance of fats, minerals, and vitamins too. So the class studies the raising of vegetables, fruits, poultry, etc, which leads to a discussion of soil and climatic factors in the growth of vegetables and fruits.

But the real test of the interest in the lesson comes when we take our hoes in hand to make a vegetable garden, or to dig holes for the planting of fruit trees. The hoe is a woman's tool, and it is still considered a bit shameful for a man to use it. But perhaps it is a little different when one is studying "agriculture", and when a boy really wants to know what the crops are that will make the body strong. So they take up their hoes and go off to the fields to start their garden project.

Thousands have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior in the Belgian Congo . . . . the Christ who came to give them the "more abundant life". But it makes one's heart sick to see so many little scrawny bodies in the villages everywhere. Yes, our first task is to preach the gospel, but let us not leave this other task undone the task of bringing strength to these weak little bodies. What do you think that Jesus would do about it if He were here walking among men?

BAYAKA BIBLE CONFERENCE

HELEN ROBBINS

PLANS had been made several months ahead. Among the Bayaka leaders-in-Christ a committee on arrangements had been chosen to prepare for the possible one hundred people who would attend. The main structure of the building that was to serve as a shelter for us during the three weeks, had been erected three months ahead. The local pastors and people had agreed to finish the building, thatching the roof and walls and pounding the dirt floor.

At two o'clock on August tenth our little truck turned off the road just beyond the "bundle-of-wood" hunter's fetish, and bumped over the grassland to the Regional School site. Along the road we had seen promises of big events. Groups of young men with little bundles on their heads were hurrying along and shouted in greeting as we passed. Scores of women with heavy baskets of dried cassava root were trudging Boko-ward (Boko is the name of the site for the new Bayaka station), at the call of the local stateman to bring market to us.

We were met at the site by a group of disconcerted folk. The building had not been touched. Not one stick had been tied in place; not one bundle of thatch had been brought from the plain. Not the most rudimentary of accommodations had been provided just a wide open plateau—and here we were with our two little sons, and another truck following with three other missionaries who were to be with us for a few days. Sheepishly the members of the committee tried to "pass the buck", but with little conviction. We told them that they must build quickly or we would have to return to Kikongo with our family. Then we drove to the little government transient house a few kilometers away.

Like guilty children they went to work. Under our direction in two days the heavier timbers were in and bound together with long slender poles, which form the frame work of the roof and walls. To this the thatch had been tied with forest string—and we moved in—with grass still growing on the floor. We slept at Boko!

In two days the three-room building had been erected with nothing more than the simple tools, the axe and the machete.

The next day our regular program began: Service at 6 a.m., breakfast and staff prayer meeting. Our helpers included two teachers from Kikongo and two pastors from Vanga. Until noon there were classes in Bible, soul-winning, Christian Doctrine, Singing, Christian living and Inquirers classes. Two o'clock — work ! The work period was the biggest objective testimony to the presence of the Spirit—for whom He controls He makes a new creature. With the enthusiastic leadership of our helpers, the buildings began to go up: two dormitories, a little house for teachers, and a fine three room pastor's house. All this the work of less than one hundred people working three hours a day for three weeks; and every bit of material had to be cut and brought in from the woods and prepared before being put to use. As enthusiasm grew there was rivalry. When a long line of bundles of thatch appeared over the ridge, other workers would race to capture them from the heads of the bearers, and were frequently tackled by comrades on the way back. There was shouting and singing, as only Africans can sing.

At night another short prayer meeting; and each day personal talks and prayer fellowship; examination of school children; the weighing of dried cassava root, sugar cane, bananas, dried caterpillars and fragrant salt fish covered with swarming bees; telling of the Gospel message for the first time to the fetish adorned women who brought the market products.

There was a little house and tent, but most of the Bayakas preferred to sleep in the forest. Under the trees they made little platforms and spread their mats. Between the mats many little fires glowed picturesquely all through the night.

Down in the woods, too, were the three classrooms—on the side of the hill, with logs supported on forked sticks as seats, and a teacher's desk made of sticks and forest string. A blackboard hung from a limb. With forest beauty all about what more could one ask?

Day by day the Spirit worked in hearts that were discouraged and tempted, weak and sorely tried. Gradually Peters and Johns

were called back from their fishing and Marks drawn back to their work. Unpaid, disgruntled evangelists became eager to return to their task. Something was happening in the Bayaka country and those who passed by on foot and those who drove past in truck and touring car saw the evidence.

The weeks were climaxed by the yearly meeting of the Bayaka church. It was not a spectacular time, for there were only two hundred in attendance with half that number taking communion, but it was a blessed time. Saturday, when the last bit of thatch had been tied on the last house, candidates were examined for baptism and two accepted. Two young couples were married just at sunset, to start life together in the Lord's service.

Sunday morning the baptismal procession filed singly down the long path to a spot where the leaves of overhanging branches danced with the sunlight and shadow reflected from the rippling water beneath. There two mature men publicly made their confession of faith in Christ. The preaching service was in the largest of the the woodland classrooms. Mr. Smith brought the message. One tiny babe was dedicated; the bridal party sang a hymn and testified to their joy in Christian marriage; thank offerings were brought to the Lord. And always the most sacred of all—the supper of the Lord where all are equal.

A glorious day! But the aftermath is the test. The work of the three weeks had been a service rendered by them for only their food. But what about the backpay of many of these evangelists who are dependent upon the self-support of a weak and struggling church? There was very little money and seventy of them. Ten cents, eight cents—everyone received a little—but what is ten cents when there are a wife and four children back in the village? But no one grumbled. It was too good to be true, except that all things are possible in the Lord. That is why His work is such a challenge.

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ, — *Phil. 3:8*

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AT MOANZA

VIVIAN ABBOTT

COULD you have spent February 13 with us at Moanza what a thrill you would have had as you stepped into our beautiful little stone church. And had you been a few minutes late the lovely old hymn, "Take Time To Be Holy" would have floated out to greet you as only the mellow voices of 800 Africans can sing when their hearts are in it.

Last year the men took a back seat but not so this year. In the planning of the service for this year it was decided that "World Day of Prayer" meant not only Christian women but Christian men as well for it is a day in which all Christians the world over unite their hearts and minds in prayer no matter what their language, race or color. As you glanced quietly around, you would have noticed that the seats had been pushed as closely together as could be in order to get as many as possible in and that the floor in the church was packed with little folk eager to pray and to hear the Word of God. In a row behind the pulpit sat Mama Malata, wife of the head teacher and of a class of school girls, Mama Naomi Lumengu, wife of our station pastor and matron of the girls' school, Tata Kiungu, station pastor, Tata Muvuyu, assistant head teacher, Tata Daniel Keti, head mason of the station, and head infirmier Daniel Mpula. Each spoke in turn on various questions concerning prayer.

"*Why do we pray*" was very aptly answered by Mama Malata who said that we must pray continually and without ceasing to get strength and to be strong in the spirit.

Following her message the pastor led in a prayer for strength to "Measure up" to the Christian and asked God to "wake us up" to our responsibility as Christians.

"*What time should we pray?*" Tata Keti answered that we must pray at all times and all seasons and not just when we think we want something.

Following his little talk, "Nearer My God to Thee" was sung by the school girls and it really did bring us nearer to Him as we sat quietly and listened to the music and opened our hearts to

the messages brought to us by these Christian leaders.

"*What things keep us from praying?*" was very ably answered by the pastor's wife who said that perhaps we don't always ask believing that we will receive. Too often we ask indifferently and doubting God's ability.

We must pray in the name of Jesus, answered Tata Muvuyu to the question of "*How must we pray?*" He continued by saying that many times we are like children. Yes, we know our Father, we have come to him many times and received and so now we come saying, "Father, I'd like this or that or I want this." When we do not receive, we say as would a child, "See, Father doesn't love me any more." We must learn that sometimes God must say "No, my child, you must trust my judgment this time because this that you ask for, you cannot have."

Infirmier Mpula's words brought to mind "*For what should we pray?*" He reminded us very clearly that we must always remember to give thanks, pray for the fallen, for those who know not Christ, the sorrowing and sick and lastly for ourselves.

Following his message many of the congregation led in prayer remembering the sick and suffering of the world, those who had fallen by the wayside, those who had not yet accepted Him as King of their lives, for those who are just beginning to follow Him, for the forwarding of the Bayaka work, for more missionaries and especially doctors, for our students who are at Sona Bata and Kimpese studying to be infirmiers and pastors and teachers, and lastly for the Christians of our stations and their families. In the 10 churches of our Moanza field there were 3839 people praying at the same time (including the 800 here on the station). Truly if we as peoples and nations of the world could only learn also to kneel at the feet of Jesus together and as children of a great family, there would be more wonders wrought than we could ever dream of. If we would kneel more often at the feet of Jesus as a "World Family" there would be no need to worry about the Atom Bomb.

"Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

LEOPOLDVILLE, NOVEMBER 1923 AND 1948

RHODA ARMSTRONG

WHILE at home on furlough this summer, we had occasion to go through books and papers left by my father, and in them we found all the letters that we had sent home from Congo. When we were very new missionaries, just arrived on the field, I had to come to Leopoldville for a few days, and there I wrote the following letter under this heading in November 1923:

"A place like this is very hard for missionaries. Of course, it attracts Congolese from all over, just as the large cities at home attract people who want to make money. But very many of those who come are unable to withstand the temptations that go along with city life (and even if this seems like a small town to us from home, it is a large city to these natives who come from their bush villages). So always the advice of the missionaries has been: Don't go to Kinshasa. But the government calls for workers, the Africans themselves are anxious to go, and so it is coming to be the rule now to warn those who do go against the temptations here, and helping them so they may remain faithful. For after all, if we could get a group of Congo people here who would live Christian lives, they might be of much more good than if they had stayed home.

"Their attitude is well illustrated by a woman from upriver who was talking to Mrs. Reynolds the other day. Evidently she herself went to church, but other people from her village or station did not come along. She said that their favorite excuse was 'This isn't God's town. We don't have to go to church here on Sunday, or live Christian lives. Upriver is God's town. Here it doesn't matter.' One of the Presbyterian missionaries tells about coming down river on a steamer and seeing some boys from the mission washing their clothes on Sunday. 'What? Do you do that at home on Sunday, in the mission?'

'No, but we aren't on the mission station now.' "

* * *

Now it is November 1948. Kinshasa has become Leopoldville, and our conference has sent us to work here. Except for the fact that it has changed during these years from what seemed to us then a "small town" to a modern city, the main impression is still much the same as it was twenty-five years ago. Leopoldville attracts Congolese in greater numbers than ever before, and it seems harder than ever for them to realize that God calls them to follow faithfully, no matter where they are. But a group of African Christians, thoroughly committed in their actions and lives to what God wants them to be, can do more and better witnessing to their fellow men than the missionaries can ever hope to do.

We are in the midst of an evangelistic crusade here in Leopoldville. With special prayer, study, and instruction we are trying to prepare our church members for personal visitation and evangelistic calling, so that we may reach these others who for one reason or another, have neglected to identify themselves with the church since they left their villages or inland mission stations, or those who never have come into a vital relationship with Christ and need to be sought and brought to Him. This is "God's town" but how can it be known unless we who are God's people show it to others?

. . . and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his suffering, becoming like him in his death, if that is possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. — ***Phil. 3:9-11***

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

EMILY SATTERBERG

YES, Mama, The Lord is my Shepherd" said Masala as I was talking with him this afternoon.

Masala is one of our lepers. He was quite unsightly in that his face was very deformed by large nodules, his feet and hands were swollen. He was constantly aware of a heaviness and burning in his feet which made him very miserable both day and night.

However he is one of the fortunate few to receive a new drug which seems to be helping him. His face looks almost normal, the swelling in his hands and feet has disappeared. He walks and works without any difficulty. He is happy and content as can be.

He was and is interested in his own physical welfare. He is trying to improve himself mentally and spiritually as well. He said "The Lord is my Shepherd," and as he said this his face beamed, "Even when I did not feel well I had peace in my heart."

He told me that while he was still in school he learned that he was a leper; that if he wanted to get well he must come to us for treatment. He was thankful to God for our leper camp, for Dr. Tuttle who works there so faithfully; for the other missionaries who have helped him come into the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ. It was at the leper camp that he accepted Christ as his Savior. He was baptized by Rev. Metzger and joined the little church.

He went on to say that because the Lord was his Shepherd he had nothing to fear and that to know Christ was the most important thing in his life. In time of trouble and temptation he knew that Christ was with him. Then he said: "My faith is in Him and if our faith is strong then nothing can harm us and nothing can pull us away from Him. He is all powerful and he did not run away from the Cross. He died on the Cross for me."

Masala studies his Bible, knows and uses the Scripture verses freely. He is a faithful witness for Christ.

Many of the lepers do know Him but there are others who

have yielded to temptation and are no longer walking with Him. They are being disciplined. (In Congo we believe in Church Discipline.)

Our prayer for the work among the lepers is that all of them may come to know Christ as their personal Savior and to know as Masala knows and states so emphatically, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

THE DOCTOR WHO HEALS

C. J. Jump

AS we travel about the Vanga field, we hear many of the Christians designate themselves as "bana ba nganga buka" (Children of the doctor who heals.) Originating out of the native name for Dr. Leslie, the pioneer medical missionary, who first brought the gospel of salvation and healing to the Kwilu River area, it has been perpetuated in the popular usage until now it is known and understood by state officials, traders, and others to mean all those who have entered the Christian fellowship through the ministry of the Vanga Church. While the name at first referred primarily to the medical healing of the missionary, the phrase also means healing of the heart.

Vanga is proud to be known as the mission of the "nganga buka", for truly it does proclaim "the doctor who heals", the Great Physician who healed them that had need of healing, and who heals still the broken bodies and perplexed minds and sinful souls of Congo. For so long as there are faithful "children of the doctor who heals", so long will there be hope for a suffering world.

> "*The healing of his seamless dress*
> *Is by our beds of pain;*
> *We touch him in life's throng and press,*
> *And we are whole again.*"

STANDING AT THE PORTAL

Standing at the portal
Of the opening year
Words of comfort meet us
Hushing every fear,
Spoken through the silence
By our Father's voice,
Tender, strong, and faithful,
Making us rejoice.

'I, the Lord, am with thee,
Be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen,
Be thou not dismayed:
Yea, I will uphold thee
With My own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen
In My sight to stand.

For the year before us,
O what rich supplies !
For the poor and needy
Living streams shall rise;
For the sad and sinful
Shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble
Perfect strength be found.

He will never fail us,
He will not forsake;
His eternal covenant
He will never break.
Resting on His promise
What have we to fear?
God is all sufficient
For the coming year.

Onward, then, and fear not,
Children of the day,
For His word shall never,
Never pass away.

-Frances Ridley Havergal

BOKO

LEONARD GITTINGS

(*A church center in the Sona Bata district.*)

IT is 9 p.m., and the sounds of this Congo village in which I am staying are dying down into almost perfect stillness. It has been another busy day in the life of an evangelistic missionary and it has brought inspiration and joy enough.

From morning until almost sun down we were engaged in examining 53 inquirers who sought baptism and tonight I still feel the inspiration that came to me as I listened to the testimonies of earnest and intelligent faith by some of those we examined. I can still visualize the faces of some of those whose expressions were illuminated as they spoke of the saving work of Jesus Christ in their own experience.

Then there was the meeting in the large brick church built by the local group of believers. The place was filled and my Welsh blood was stirred as the crowd sang in full harmony. Sitting at the front of the church, I suddenly became aware of the significance of three men near me, each of whom I could have touched by reaching out my arm. First there was the local pastor, big-boned and heavy, a preacher of no mean ability, but a gentle and wise leader of the flock, whose evening prayer warmed my heart. Then there was a visiting assistant pastor from a neighboring village. Tall and dignified, he stood up to give the evening message, his deep, resonant voice and earnest bearing commanding immediate attention. His theme? "Fruit-bearing Christians." How effectively he urged upon his hearers the challenge to efficient and useful Christian living and service!

Finally right alongside me sat the venerable white-haired chief of a large section of the country. Never too busy to leave the cares of his chieftainship to attend the regular services of the church, he often expounds the Word of Life himself at such gatherings. I noticed that he used no hymn-book but as we sang verse after verse of several hymns (and our people sing all the verses

however long the hymn) he never faltered. In a voice that was pleasing though age had plainly weakened it he sang the bass part and did not miss a verse. He was perfectly natural and at home in the house of the God whom he has served for many years.

Just one more day, just one more village in my itinerary, yet so much for which to thank God and take courage. The sowing of the seed is bearing its harvest, thirty-fold, sixty-fold, one hundred-fold.

One of my gentlemen friends brought me some flowers today. He does it every week, even through dry season. I haven't seen him for several days and last week he sent his flowers. I asked if he had been sick. "Yes", was his answer, "We old men are often sick." And so he passed it off. He has a right to be sick if it is age that counts. His name is Mpeya. When he was a small boy he was a slave. Stanley bought him and gave him to Dr. Sims and told him never to leave him. He never did as long as Dr. Sims was in this country. Mpeya likes to walk about our station and look at the palm tree which he planted many years ago. He points out places here and there and says there used to be buildings there. When he sees me walking in the sun he tells me to be careful. White men die from the sun. I wouldn't argue with him in the least. He is my tie with the past and all that is romantic here in Congo. He is an old man and has a right to express his opinion. Now he has his little house and it is a beauty spot in the native city. I wonder what kind of flowers he will bring me next week. I must send him some tea and sugar.

PHYLLIS BENNER.

A LEOPARD STORY FROM URUNDI

RHODA ARMSTRONG

THE following incident took place in the valley just across from the mission station here. I can see the spot from where I am sitting.

It was a hot, sleepy afternoon. Two or three men were resting in the door of their hut, while Filipo the evangelist told them of Jesus. But the quiet was suddenly broken by an excited little boy. "A leopard", he shouted, "It has bitten old Kechuru !"

"What nonsense", said one of the men. "There are no leopards around here."

But a moment later a woman came by.

"Have you heard?" she said. "Kechuru has been attacked by a leopard, and they are out hunting it in the valley."

The men jumped to their feet. Leopards are very rare in this part of Africa, they prefer the plains where there is game. Seizing their spears, the menset off running down the hill. When they reached the valley, they joined an excited crowd and watched two men enter a field of corn with raised spears. Suddenly the leopard sprang on one of them. The other drove it off, and took refuge in some reeds. Quickly the crowd surrounded the reeds and tried to drive it out. Their efforts proved vain, so Filipo borrowed a hatchet from some one, and went forward to cut away the reeds and drive it out. A friend followed with a spear ready, keeping watch for the leopard. However, he did not see it, and suddenly Filipo found himself staring straight into its eyes !

There was a roar, and in an instant Filipo was lying on his back, with the leopard on top of him. Through half-closed eyes he saw the beast's huge mouth open to take his head into it. He tried to push it off with his left hand which the infuriated animal immediately seized in its mouth. But by the goodness of God, Filipo found that if he held his hand between the long eye teeth, the leopard could not hurt it, as the middle teeth were too short to bite with. While the leopard was trying to force Filipo's hand over to the side of its mouth, he contrived to raise the hatchet

with his other hand, and dealt it a blow in the face. It let go at once, and bounding through the terrified onlookers, hid in some nearby grass.

Slowly Filipo got to his feet, thanking God for his deliverance. He examined his hand with awe. It had been right inside a leopard's mouth and hardly torn at all—in fact beyond a few scratches he was unhurt! Looking round for the friend who should have been protecting him, he found him lying on the ground. He had been knocked over when the leopard sprang, and had not dared get up again.

Meanwhile the people had surrounded the patch of grass, and had started throwing spears into it. But they were now so scared that they were throwing short. Soon all the spears were sticking in the grass round where the leopard lay without one having touched it. As no one else would venture in to get them, Filipo volunteered, and with another man behind to whom he could pass them, he edged forward. When he had collected most of them he returned, and this time every one threw together, and so the leopard was killed.

When all was over Filipo told the people how God had saved him from the one who goes around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goals for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. — Phil. 3:12-14

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. — Phil. 4:8

AN ILLUSTRATION BY KIBA PIERRE

V. L. Smith

THE theme of the sermon was a warning against Satan and his emissaries who first ensnare by making their offer attractive, and then enslave the victim. The story, told below, is a true one of an incident that occurred recently.

"A very fine young man, having finished both grammar school and Normal School, was given a position in a bank at Leopoldville. He was doing very well and earned a fine salary. One day, an emissary of Satan, in the form of a friend working at the same bank, came to him and told him how foolish it was for a man with his education to have a position inferior to other workers in the bank who had less education than he.

The "friend" offered to tell him how he would be able to pass over the heads of the senior workers, and obtain the highest position that the bank had to offer a Congo worker.

The young man, even though a baptised Christian of the Roman Catholic church, went to the home of his "friend". He was told of another "friend" who possessed powerful fetishes and who was willing to help the young man to obtain the coveted position. So they went at night to the home of the fetisher, and the first payment was made. After several visits to the fetisher, during which the young man's body was rubbed with certain fetishes, he was given possession of a little bundle of grass which he was supposed to wear on a string tied to his arm. But there was one condition that had to be fulfilled before the fetish would be efficient. The young man must kill his own father. The young man was a bit startled, but by this time the acquirement of the coveted position had become an obsession.

The young man requested and secured a leave of absence from the bank in order that he might return to his own village and visit his parents. He spent several weeks with his family and friends and then came the day of testing. The fetisher had told him that a sign would be given to him. He was to ask his father for a cock, and if his father gave it to him, it would be a sign

that his father had put himself into his power and would die. So the young man explained to his father that he was seeking a cock and noticed that there were three cocks in his father's yard. The father looked intently at his son and replied: It is well known that a man may bear a son, but it has not yet been heard that a son can bear his own father. The interpretation of that reply, in modern "American" would be: You're smart, my son, but not smart enuf to put it over on dad.

Traffic with fetishes has become so widespread and evil at the modern city of Leopoldville, that it has become common knowledge among the older villagers out in the bush, that requests such as the one made by this young man have a sinister motive.

The young man realized that he had been caught, and he promptly went out of his mind. Today he is in the asylum for insane at Leopoldville.

* * * * *

The four year old baby of one of our station workers died very suddenly and Kiba Pierre was asked to conduct the funeral service. Among other things, he offered this in the way of consolation : When we receive a tiny baby from the Lord's hands, we rejoice greatly. He also rejoices with us, because he wants us to be happy. Should we cry out and demonstrate great grief when He, on the other hand, takes the child back to be with Himself? Should we not rather give the child back to Him as happily and generously as He first gave it to us?

A TESTIMONY

EDWIN BOONE

TATA Munzekila Pierre is a short slender man who always has a friendly smile and an extended hand to welcome all who come in contact with him. This is what he says about his life work:

"I first entered school in a small church school in my village. I went there two years and after that I started teaching school at Kimpemba probably in 1920. In 1922 I came here to Sona Bata to enter a class for teachers. At the close of this year I went to Kimpemba. In 1927 I entered school at Kimpese and finished in 1930. I went back to Kimpemba—this time as a pastor. I stayed five years. I served on two other fields before coming to this present work in 1946.

"I preach for the people in nearby villages, there must be sixteen. I visit in their homes, answer their questions and try to help them with their difficulties and problems. There are no pastors in these villages. I walk or ride my bicycle to get there.

"I was saved in 1920. The pastor talked to me to show that Jesus was our Saviour. I was baptized here at Sona Bata by a native pastor. Then in school when I told the boys that Christ died on the cross for our sins I knew that He had died for my own too. I like to preach sermons on the Christian life. Then I like to tell people that they must carry the Good News to others. I like to tell stories. I use our proverbs which have been given to us by those who have gone on before us. I use these to help explain the message. People say they do not understand the Word of God, but when I tell a story to illustrate it they understand.

"I like to read, but there isn't much to read in my language. We need books because we have very little to help us with our work. There are a lot of white people in their countries, I wish they would send us more missionaries to preach the Word of Jesus in this country and to teach our people."

THE POWER OF A PROVERB

B. W. Armstrong

Some years ago at Sona Bata we had husband-and-wife trouble between one of the teachers in the central school and his wife. It was nothing new, he was resentful of his wife's intelligence and ability, and this led to discord in the home. On this particular occasion, the husband was eating his manioc porridge when he discovered a cockroach in it. He flew into a rage, accused the wife of trying to poison him, and demanded the right to put her away. Naturally, we could not condone any such conduct on his part. He was a prominent man on the station, a graduate of our pastors' training school, and a leader among the school boys, but would not listen to reason. He would not accept that it was just an accident, that it did not of necessity imply carelessness on the part of his wife, he would not even admit that in general she was a good wife and mother. Nothing would satisfy him but a separation with no blame attached to himself.

We called in some of the pastors from the district churches to try to settle the palaver. From early morning to late afternoon the dispute went on with the teacher being very stubborn against the wishes of every one else. Every one was tired, tempers were ruffled, patience was wearing thin. Then one of the old pastors with graying hair, straggly beard, and all the prestige of a Congo elder stood up, shook a finger up and down in front of the stubborn young man, and quoted a Congo proverb : "Mu vata difwa nleke, ka difwanga mbuta ko." This crushed the opposition of the teacher, restored a Christian home, and enhanced the prestige of the wise old men. The meaning of the proverb was simply "If in the village, a young man dies it does not mean that the elders are also dead."

It seems to us that the younger generation of Congo pastors are not masters of the old proverbs as their fathers were.

FASHION FADS AND BEAUTY TREATMENTS

LEONARD GITTINGS

EVEN in the heart of Africa fashion holds sway, and beauty treatments of one kind and another are as earnestly sought by women of the Congo bush as by women at home. However, treatments and style are definitely different from those in America.

Starting with the head, I must first refer to the various types of hair dressing adopted by both men and women. Some of these are so elaborate that it takes days to complete the arrangement. Because the hair of the African is so short the beauty specialist, who does his or her work under a tree in the village, may use grass cloth, beads, mud and native dyes to produce some very striking effects. The simpler fashions may include an arrangement similar to a Marcel wave, the plaiting of the hair into long strands which are then wound around the head or tied on top of it or the smearing of the hair with mud in order to build a kind of cylindrical formation that looks like a short stove pipe sticking up behind the head. As civilization advances the natives find they have less time to sit for days while their hair is being done, and the more elaborate fashions are now met with less frequently.

Cicatrization is still practiced extensively either for the purpose of producing tribal marks or simply because certain kinds of scars are considered aids to beauty. The face or body (usually chest and abdomen) are cut in numerous places following a pattern that varies with the tribe and district. Into these cuts is rubbed an irritating compound of native herb and medicines. When the wounds finally heal prominent scars remain. Some of those so treated, especially the women, have faces and bodies that look like plowed fields. Among some tribes a youth will not marry a girl who is not so marked. She is contemptuously referred to as a fish. Therefore the older women of the tribe take the young girls in hand during adolescence and do the cutting themselves.

Among several tribes in the heart of the Congo the people either file down the two central upper teeth or remove them entirely. This, they think, improves their appearance. The native

method of removing such teeth is neither painless nor is it an extraction. Itis a painful expulsion. A piece of slender but strong stick is placed against the tooth or teeth to be removed, and then: the outside end of the stick is struck a sharp blow with a club of some kind. When I first started extracting teeth among the Basonge tribe, I had a rush of clients who wished me to remove their two front upper teeth. I had quite a time convincing numerous young African belles that I was resolved not to pull any good teeth. But I was compelled to extract a good few score of teeth which had been ruined by being filed down. And I pulled out more than one root that had been left in when the club and stick method had knocked off the top of the tooth.

One of the strangest fashions is that of boring holes through the nostrils in order that bits of rounded stick, or buttons, or even small coins may be inserted into or attached to the sides of the nose. The ears are also treated in the same way so that beads or native made earrings may be inserted or suspended. As for the lips some tribes practice the custom of pulling them out until the upper lip may be made to protrude as much as two inches. Such is the slavery of fashion !

In centers where white influence is felt and white man's goods are found, the native becomes a ready customer as he follows fashion. The African loves gay colors, and men and women often clothe themselves in the brightest array they can find. Some of the young dandies parade in silk trousers and shirts of the brightest green, red, blue and yellow, while the women often select the most gaudy cloth from the multi-colored variety that lines the shelves of the average store in the village or white center. Some of these cloths really catch the eye. One may be covered with the flags of the allied nations of World War II or with scenes taken from that war. Another may be covered with prints of all kinds of African animals. Still another will boast pictures of playing cards, checkers, dominoes, postage stamps or Congo money. Sometimes strange-looking dragons, airplanes, palm trees, flowers and birds will be thrown together in a medley of pattern and color. Some of the cloths are most attractive, and some of the women show good taste in their choice. Those who are able to pur-

chase enough cloth make a two piece dress, a headdress to match, a kind of shawl of the same material, and if they have young children, a wide piece to wind around the waist to hold the child when the mother travels. The price of cloth has risen tremendously, and even the men who receive wages from the white men groan continually about the high prices of their wives' clothing. Hundreds of thousands of women, of course, wear little besides a short loin cloth, but the desire for more cloth is reaching far into the villages of the hinterland. Congo women are sending up the sales record continually, and is still a great potential supply of customers for the white trader among them.

THEY REALLY WANTED TO

LEONARD GITTINGS

THE mother was a small aged shriveled little thing, but her face was keen and alert. She hardly seemed capable of walking one mile, yet she had walked *ten* that day. And not alone, for she led her grown up daughter along the narrow, winding trail. The daughter was *blind.* They would have seemed a most pathetic pair, were it not for the eagerness in their manner.

They were two of five hundred whom we were examining for baptism in one of our church posts. When their turn came, they came in eagerly. It didn't take long for me to decide. At a church post where the candidates were particularly well instructed, they were in no way behind the others. Their witness as to their own experience was simple, clear, and sincere; their understanding of Christian doctrines surprisingly full.

A day or two later they both stood with some three hundred others on the edge of the baptismal waters. The plucky, earnest little mother led her daughter into the water. They were baptized together. It was worth a ten-mile walk.

NEWS ITEMS

LEOPOLDVILLE — Sunday we had our annual *Matondo* (Thanksgiving meeting). The church was filled for the morning service at which time we baptized thirteen whom we had carefully examined the week before. The pastor and I were both in the baptistry and took turns in baptizing. At 3:30 we had our *Matondo* meeting outside and had over 1000 people present. All was quiet and we had a wonderful meeting with special music, flannelgraph stories by some students, a good evangelistic message in Lingala and another in Kikongo, the *matondo* offering and a wedding. This was, no doubt, the biggest day for the natives in a long time. It took a lot of work but was worth all of it to know that so many heard the Gospel.

KIKONGO — Rev. and Mrs. L.A. Brown and Wesley have arrived at last, bringing with them the 3 ton truck which is so much needed in the work of building which Mr. Atkins is doing.

Rev. and Mrs. E. Atkins celebrated their silver wedding anniversary and Rev. and Mrs. W.F. Robbins their fifteenth on September 1. The staff gathered at Smith's house for the occasion. The table was appropriately and beautifully decorated, with a cake for each couple, bougainvillea and white frangipane, cards and gifts.

MOANZA — During August — The first sun-dried brick church was completed in our Moanza field. It was impressive to hear the men and teachers burst forth into song when the roof was nearing completion.

August 21-27 - The Jumps were with us to start work on the Laubach Adult Literacy Campaign.

September - The Abbotts spent the month at Vanga and Kikongo.

October 8 - Alice Jorgenson, our nurse, arrived after furlough to the great delight of us all, but especially to the infirm and the infirmiers at the hospital.

October 15-18 - Dr. and Mrs. Jesse R. Wilson paid us a hurried visit.

" 15-19 - Rev. and Mrs. Gittings, Roland and Stanley who brought the Wilsons stayed for a few days.

" 19 - Marguerite Eldredge went with the Gittings to Vanga returning to Moanza on October 24th with Dr. Philip Austin.

" 24 - Dr. Philip Austin performed nineteen operations and held many consultations during his ten-days stay.

November - Four gatherings in the district conclude the twelve church convocations held since August.

BANZA MANTEKE — Our new Maternity Ward which Esther Ehnbom planned and for which she secured funds from the Colonial Government is being completed under the supervision of Dr. Freas. There has been a great influx of operative cases since our doctor's arrival and at times the hospital is so crowded that many of the patients' relatives have to sleep out under the trees.

When the invitation was given recently at our Sunday service for those to come forward who wished to follow Christ over 70 of our Central School pupils responded. It was a time of great rejoicing; 333 of our pupils are already church members, 214 boys and 119 girls.

Dr. and Mrs. Jesse Wilson's visit with us was greatly appreciated both by missionaries and Congolese workers. When the "big chief" of the Mission went to the Carpenter Shop and demonstrated his ability to plane and saw boards it made a great impression.

The long awaited visit of the Government inspector to inspect our school took place last month. We were all delighted that Mme. Verbeyst and the children came along. The inspector

was most cordial and yet frank and gave us much valuable criticism and advice in regard to the conduct of our school.

Annis Ford has left for her first furlo, hoping to get home in time to celebrate Christmas with her mother. She'll be missed around these parts in more ways than one.

OTHER ITEMS : We all greatly rejoice in having the Mission Secretary and his wife back in Congo. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong arrived at Matadi October 16, paid brief visits at Banza Manteke, Kimpese and Sona Bata as they drove through to Leopoldville. They had been at Leopoldville only 5 weeks when they started for a trip through the *Kwango* area, visiting Vanga, Moanza, Kikongo and Boko.

It was also a real joy and boon to all the stations to see Dr. and Mrs. Jesse Wilson. Their visits were brief, but helpful.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

— Hebrews 12:1-2

O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

O God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home !

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Still may we dwell secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages, in Thy sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be Thou our guide while life shall last,
And our eternal home !

Isaac Watts.

Belgian Congo Mission

V. 40:2
1949:2

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

BANZA MANTEKE
via Matadi
Miss Mary Bonar
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas

KIKONGO sur Wamba
via Banningville
Miss Agnes Anderson, R.N.
Miss Gertrude Anderson
Rev. E. and G. Atkins
Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins
Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith

E.P.I. KIMPESE
via Matadi
Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson

LEOPOLDVILLE II
Mr. and Mrs. B.W. Armstrong
Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Boone
Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Watkins

MOANZA sur Inzia,
via Masimanimba
Rev. and Mrs. E. R. Abbott
Rev. and Mrs. T. E. Bubeck
Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Miss Alice Jorgenson, R.N.

SONA BATA
via Matadi
Miss Vendla Anderson
Miss Helen Gaskill
Miss Jean Luckey
Rev. and Mrs. R. G. Metzger
Miss Emily Satterberg, R.N.
Dr. and Mrs. G.W. Tuttle
Dr. and Mrs. E.W. Price (BMS)

VANGA sur Kwilu
Dr. Jean J. Austin
Rev. Ruth Dickey
Rev. and Mrs. L. Gittings
Rev. and Mrs. C. J. Jump
Dr. Philip Austin (BMS)

ON FURLOUGH

Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Carpenter
Miss Esther Ehnbom, R.N.
Miss Annis Ford
Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall
Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Osterholm

STUDY IN BELGIUM

Rev Phyllis Benner
Miss Eva Shepard
Rev. and Mrs. Philip Uhlinger
Miss Doris Wiseman
Miss Dorothy Wiseman, R.N.

** Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese*